

Remarks

Claims 24 through 28, 30 through 32 and 44 through 46 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kaiser '523. Claims 24, 29 and 33 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Onishi '364. Claims 24, 34 through 36 and 38 through 42 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vaughn '367 in view of Seger '415. Claim 37 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vaughn in view of Seger as applied to claim 34 and in further view of Leonard '758. Claim 43 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Vaughn in view of Seger as applied to claim 34 in further view of Seiss '366.

In responding to these rejections, the Applicant has amended claim 24 to include the limitations of former claim 29 which has accordingly been cancelled. Moreover, claim 24 has been further amended to specify that the main rotor and the additional rotors are each disposed, structured and dimensioned to surround the steering column. Independent method claim 44 has been amended to be dependent on amended claim 24. The Applicant respectfully submits that claim 24 as amended is distinguished from the prior art of record for the following reasons.

Former claim 29, whose content is now incorporated into amended claim 24, stood rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Onishi '364. In articulating the rejection, the Examiner has associated the main rotor recitation with reference symbol 11 of Onishi and the additional rotor with reference symbol 31. However, in contrast to the claim language in amended claim 24, the additional rotor 31 of Onishi is not disposed, structured and dimensioned to surround the steering column, rather is displaced therefrom, has no central opening, and is substantially smaller than the main rotor 11 which, in fact, does surround the steering column.

This claimed feature of the additional rotor in accordance with the invention is therefore missing from the Onishi disclosure.

Claim 24 as amended has the advantage of providing for a flexible range in the transmission gear ratios through variation of the offset between the axes of rotation of the main rotor and the additional rotor. Moreover, by disposing and structuring both the main rotor and the additional rotor to surround the steering column, a compact configuration is achieved in the crowded steering column region. Onishi clearly teaches away from this latter recitation by displacing the additional rotor 31 well beyond the steering column axis of rotation. The invention therefore has features not suggested by the prior art of record having associated advantages and is therefore sufficiently distinguished from that prior art to satisfy the conditions of not only 35 USC 102 but also 35 USC 103. The dependent claims of record inherit the limitations of independent claim 24 and are therefore similarly distinguished from the prior art of record for the reasons given. Favorable review and passage to issuance is therefore requested.

No new matter has been added to this amendment.

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Respectfully submitted,

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